

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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TAGS: PFOR, MT, US

SUBJECT: EDITORIAL ON MALTESE/US RELATIONS

1. THE JANUARY 25 ISSUE OF THE PRO-MINTOFF MALTA NEWS  
FEATURED A EFFUSIVE EDITORIAL ON THE SUBJECT OF  
FUTURE MALTESE/US RELATIONS. THE BASIC THRUST OF THE  
EDITORIAL WAS THAT THERE SHOULD BE A "NEW ERA" OF  
"IMPROVEMENT" AND "CLOSER CO-OPERATION" BETWEEN MALTA  
AND THE UNITED STATES NOW THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION  
HAS TAKEN OVER IN WASHINGTON.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: THE FULL TEXT OF THE JANUARY 25  
EDITORIAL IN THE MALTA NEWS WAS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT: MALTA AND THE US

"MALTA AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE GONE THROUGH AN  
ERA OF COLD FRIENDSHIP FOLLOWING THE MALTESE SOCIALIST

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GOVERNMENT'S DECISION IN 1971 TO MAKE GRAND HARBOUR OUT  
OF BOUNDS FOR THE WARMONGERING NAVIES OF THE TWO SUPER  
POWERS WHICH HAVE TURNED THE MEDITERRANEAN INTO A  
PLAYGROUND FOR SOVIET AND AMERICAN MARITIME HARDWARE.

"INITIALLY MALTA'S DECISION WAS CONSIDERED AS A SLAP  
IN THE FACE FOR THE PROUD AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE FORD  
ADMINISTRATION WAS RELUCTANT TO INCLUDE MALTA IN ANY OF

THE UNITED STATES' VAST FOREIGN AID PROGRAMS. MALTA'S PRO-ARAB POLICY ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO ADD ICE TO THE COLD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS.

"WITH THE EXIT OF GERALD FORD FROM THE WHITE HOUSE, THE OBVIOUS DRIFT IN AMERICAN POLICIES ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE ADVENT OF JIMMY CARTER'S NEW ADMINISTRATION, THIS SHORT ERA OF FRIGIDITY IN MALTESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS IS EXPECTED TO THAW GRADUALLY HERALDING CLOSER CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC LEADERS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOCIALIST DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF MALTA.

"HOW RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE GOING TO IMPROVE REMAINS TO BE SEEN BUT JIMMY CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY IS MORE FLEXIBLE AND ORIENTATED TOWARDS CLOSER CO-OPERATION WITH DEVELOPING NATIONS THAN THE SNOBBISH OUTLOOK OF THE KISSINGER-FORD ERA.

"IN HIS ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN, CARTER PLEDGED TO LOOK WITH AN OPEN MIND AT THE COMPLEX PROBLEMS BEING EXPERIENCED BY THE THIRD WORLD AS A RESULT OF INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AND ECONOMIC INSTABILITY. HE ALSO PLEDGED TO SHIFT THE EMPHASIS IN HIS MILITARY BUDGETS ON A DEFENSIVE RATHER THAN ON AN OFFENSIVE GEARING.

"PRINCIPLES OF THE 39TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES REMAIN TO BE PUT INTO EFFECT BUT JIMMY CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY OUTLOOK AS WELL AS HIS LABOR POLICIES -- WHICH EARNED CARTER'S NOMINATION FOR THE PRESIDENCY THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE BIGGEST AMERICAN UNIONS -- ARE NEAR ENOUGH TO THE MINTOFF ADMINISTRATION'S IDEALS TO MAKE RAPPROACHMENT BETWEEN MALTA AND THE UNITED STATES A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRONG POSSIBILITY.

"MINTOFF'S OWN MESSAGE TO JIMMY CARTER AFTER HIS NOVEMBER ELECTION VICTORY IS ELOQUENT IN ITS RELIEF THAT A PROGRESSIVE PRESIDENT WAS GOING TO MOVE INTO THE WHITE HOUSE. TO THE MALTESE SOCIALIST ADMINISTRATION, CARTER'S TRIUMPH AT THE PRESIDENTIAL POLLS "REPRESENTED THE VICTORY OF PROGRESSIVE FORCES IN THE UNITED STATES OVER THE ENTRENCHED INTERESTS OF CONSERVATISM. THEY AUGUR REFORMS IN FAVOR OF THE POOR AND THE UNEMPLOYED."

"THE MALTESE PREMIER ALSO APPLAUDED CARTER'S DETERMINATION TO DEAL WITH SMALLER NATIONS INDIVIDUALLY, AWAY FROM THE OLD POWER BLOC COMMITMENTS' AS THIS ' OPENS FOR MALTA A NEW ERA OF CO-OPERATION WITH THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES.'

"THE UNUSUAL WARMTH IN CARTER'S REPLY TO THE MALTESE PREMIER'S MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS AUGURS WELL FOR THE DESIRED IMPROVEMENT IN MALTESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS. ' I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU TO STRENGTHEN THE TIES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES,' THE NEW AMERICAN

PRESIDENT REPLIED.

"MALTA NEWS ALSO LOOKS FORWARD TO CLOSER TIES BETWEEN THE MALTESE AND AMERICAN PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS. FOR CLOSER CO-OPERATION WILL BRING US NEARER TO MALTA'S ASPIRATION FOR ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE GUARANTEED BY A PEACEFUL MEDITERRANEAN." END TEXT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. COMMENT: THE MALTA NEWS IS PUBLISHED BY THE GENERAL WORKERS UNION AND IS, THEREFORE, NOT AN OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN FOR PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF OR HIS LABOR GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, THE NEWS IS A GENERALLY SYCOPHANTIC SUPPORTER OF MINTOFF'S POLICIES, AND A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE CARE AND FEEDING OF THE PERSONALITY CULT THAT SURROUNDS HIM. ALSO, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT AN EDITORIAL OF THIS KIND WOULD HAVE BEEN WRITTEN WITHOUT MINTOFF'S KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT. WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, THE EDITORIAL SHOULD, THEREFORE, BE VIEWED AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE GROWING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SENSE OF EXPECTATION AMONG THE MALTESE PUBLIC THAT BIGGER AND BETTER THINGS ARE AHEAD IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. AND TO ALL MALTESE, BOTH OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS, THAT INEVITABLY MEANS AN EXPECTATION OF TANGIBLE ASSISTANCE TO THE MALTESE ECONOMY AFTER 1979. END COMMENT. LAINGEN

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